it will be found still more difficult to preserve it from being extinguished **by** every burst of earthly passion. It is

> " The most difficult of tasks, to keep
> Heights which the soul is competent to gain."—
> WORDSWORTH.

There are times, no doubt, when there is a fervour naturally produced by the atmosphere in which the man happens to be placed; but there is a risk that his emotional temperature will sink as he goes into a different and colder atmosphere, as instantly as his bodily temperature when he has gone out of a warm apartment into the chill of a frosty night. Every careful observer of humankind knows that there are certain minds which, like mirrors, reflect the object passing before them, but only so long as it passes before them. When full under some heavenly truths, the emotions produced are lovely as those images of rocks and trees and clouds which we have seen reflected on the bosom of a tranquil lake—beautiful while they last, but removed by the first ruffling of the passing breeze. Not only so, but in the natural recoil and collapse, there is a possibility that the high excitement may speedily terminate in apathy or in enmity. The flame, beautiful while it lasts, dies down, and nothing remains but ashes. There are tides in human feeling, just as there are tides in the ocean; and because the tide is flowing now, there is no assurance of its continuing to flow—we may rather fear that it will soon ebb and recede. The man feels a momentary interest in religion, and he becomes vain in the thought that it is to continue; and this very vanity becomes the passage that leads him away to a far different temper. To-day, he weeps over his sins; and before he is aware of it, he is rejoicing in iniquity on the morrow. His efforts, even when they seem to be successful, are merely like the rippling on the surface of a stream made by winds opposed to the current; they have indeed a slight effect,

and may make the careless spectator imagine that the waters are flowing in an opposite direction, but meanwhile the current beneath is flowing on in its proper course as determinedly as ever. His elevations are like those of a ship buoyed up on the top of a wave, seemingly above the earth, but never so high as heaven, and from this height he is apt to fall into the contiguous hollow. All this shows, that while man, by his unaided strength, may rise a little above his habitual level of earthliness,